



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Democracy and Governance

July 2005



These Kabul province voters stand in line to cast their ballots on December 7, 2004 to select the 46 delegates to the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga. USAID provided critical funding for the process that supported voter registration and election efforts.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE SNAPSHOT

- Facilitated the successful Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in 2003 and 2004 as part of the Bonn Agreement.
- Supported the process which culminated in the successful 2004 presidential elections.
- Constructed 20 judicial facilities to date.
- Trained 579 judges nationwide to help them administer justice more competently and according to the law.

OVERVIEW

USAID's Democracy and Governance program supports the establishment of a functioning, democratic system of government, helping create a broadly accepted national government that can promote national unity, reduce the propensity for inter-group conflict and curtail the role of extremists. USAID accomplishes this through supporting the electoral process, re-establishing and institutionalizing the rule of law, facilitating local government reform, assisting with the establishment of a functioning legislative branch of government, and fostering the development of a viable civil society.

PROGRAMS

INCREASED CAPACITY IN THE FORMAL JUSTICE SECTOR

USAID's rule of law program works to decrease obstacles to citizens' access to the formal court system, increase the professionalism of judicial sector personnel, and strengthen the capacity of critical judicial institutions. It also establishes linkages between formal and traditional or informal judicial systems to lend additional credibility to the latter and ensure that human rights, especially the rights of women, are protected. Thus far, the program has:

- Constructed 20 judicial facilities throughout the country.
- Trained 579 judges in a series of formal training programs.
- Codified, compiled, printed and disseminated 1,000 copies of Afghanistan's basic laws in Dari and Pashto throughout the country for the first time ever.

STRENGTHENED ELECTION AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

This initiative aims to assist Afghanistan with the creation of permanent electoral institutions, enabling the Government of Afghanistan to carry out valid, acceptable elections with its own resources and expertise. It also helps political parties and candidates to understand how to compete in elections, to form coalitions and to operate in a multi-party system. This is accomplished through intensive training and technical assistance to the permanent election commission and its staff, training to political parties and candidates to assist them in campaigning and organization, civic education to increase citizens' understanding of democracy and the electoral process, and support to logistics, operations and security surrounding electoral events. The program has:



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Democracy and Governance (continued)



*Kabul, Afghanistan, December 7:
Voter registration and elections are conducted in Kabul province to select the 46 delegates to the Afghan Constitutional Loya Jirga. USAID provided critical funding for the process that supported operational, logistics and security planning for the voter registration and election efforts.*

PHOTOS: USAID/AFGHANISTAN



- Facilitated the successful Emergency and Constitutional Loya Jirgas in 2003 and 2004, by providing logistical support and assistance to the Constitutional Commission.
- Supported the successful 2004 presidential elections through voter registration, voter education, logistics and security arrangements at polling stations.
- Supported the first ever coalition of domestic election observers who monitored the presidential elections nation-wide, significantly reinforcing the legitimacy of the outcome.

INCREASED PRESENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

USAID supports programs to promote the development of a strong and active civil society, with an emphasis on women-focused organizations, providing technical training and grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) throughout the nation to help them achieve their organizational objectives. The program is also assisting the government and CSOs to draft new legislation to create an enabling environment for the development of the voluntary sector. To date, the program has:

- Selected 8 regional Afghan organizations to help implement grassroots capacity-building activities.
- Drafted, in collaboration with the government, an improved version of the newly decreed CSO Law.

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

USAID is actively working with the GoA to establish the country's first ever, truly multi-party legislature, helping the Directors of the National Assembly to form the organizational structure of the legislative branch prior to the September elections.

In addition, USAID is helping to define the structures of district government, which consists of the District Administration and eventually the elected District Councils. Currently, there is no local government code to define these structures and their authorities and relations with communities, traditional governance and adjudication bodies (shuras and jirgas), higher level provincial councils, the National Assembly and the Government in Kabul. Once the GoA establishes such a code, the USAID sponsored training program will help new administrators and councilmen perform their tasks more effectively, resulting in better delivery of public services.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.